

Spanish Fork pledges support on flood issue

By Patrick A. Bryson

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SPANISH FORK — City Council members have pledged support to the Utah County Landowners Association, joining other Utah County cities that stand behind the organization fighting Salt Lake County over flood issues.

But for now, Spanish Fork's support will be mostly moral — not financial.

The landowners association is suing the Salt

Lake Water Users Association for \$225 million. The lawsuit was filed over the failure to open floodgates on the Jordan River, causing land around Utah Lake to flood.

There had been some friction between the Spanish Fork and the landowners association caused by a letter the association sent the City Council. The letter suggested, in an abrasive manner, that the city of Spanish Fork become one of the complainants in the lawsuit and pledge more financial support.

"We're not part of the lawsuit because we're

not being flooded by the lake," said Mayor Enoch Ludlow.

Spanish Fork felt its contribution to the flooding effort was work to clear and dredge the Spanish Fork River. A crew working on the river removed more than 240,000 cubic yards of material and reinforced 47,000 feet of riverbank along problem portions of the channel. Now the river is running more than twice as fast as normal.

That work was done at substantial cost to

the city. The project was estimated to cost \$260,000, but went over its budget. The city spent \$53,000 extra for work in one area. In Canyon View Park, work cost an additional \$30,000. The city is waiting for matching state funds that will pay for most of the work, but right now money is tight.

The Utah County Landowners Association hoped for a commitment of support and money from the Spanish Fork council. They got verbal support and a small financial donation,

as well as a promise for more money whenever it becomes available.

"I think we should go on record to support them and, when money becomes available, we'll support them financially," said Councilman Jack Leifson.

Councilman Rex Woodhouse agreed with Leifson's proposal but wanted something a little stronger. "Let's amend that proposal and throw in \$250," said Woodhouse.

A member of the Landowners Association asked if the council could provide more money than that.

"We're overspent now," said Mayor Ludlow. "You can't spend public money you don't have."

The water will be diverted to the storm drains one street down to avoid further flooding.

"Everyone has been very cooperative and things are looking good and we seem to have the Slate Canyon situation under control," he said.

The goal of the city in controlling Slate Canyon water flow is to keep as little water in the water retention basin as possible and to get the water flowing out of the basin at a controlled rate, he said.

The diverted water will probably run its neighborhood course for about four weeks, Gamette said.

"It is great to see the people of Provo working together for a cause. The Arctic Circle restaurant located at a key runoff spot along

Another flooding priority is to protect the city's sewage treatment plant located near 18th South and 350 West. The plant is adjacent to the city's Timpanogos Golf Course, which has been invaded by water, said the mayor.

About 11 of the 27 holes of the course are covered with water.

"With 11 holes affected it is pretty hard to shoot par," said Dave Gunn, director of public services.

Crew planned Wednesday to add another three feet to the dikes that protect both areas, Gunn said.

"The sewer plant is definitely a priority because it affects the entire city. We want to keep any water away from the plant," he said.

Because of the flooding experience we got last year, doing it the second time sure makes a big difference," he said.

Minor damage occurred to the 10-foot dikes at the Provo Municipal Airport, which sits next to Utah Lake, said Jim Mathis, airport manager.

Water whipped by high winds washed away several rocks, but the rocks were promptly replaced on Monday night, he said.

Lake water is still about six feet below the tops of the airport dikes, Mathis said. He anticipates no problems with water coming over the dikes, but they are being monitored continually.

The current level of Utah Lake is within eight inches of peak last year, Mathis said. He

the existing dikes, will be officially completed by Friday.

The project not only increased the height of the dikes but significantly increased the strength of the dikes because of the extra material required to expand the base, he said.

"We are working on over \$1 million worth of airport projects (to improve the airport itself) this summer. We wouldn't be doing these projects if we thought there would be flooding out here," he said.

The Provo River is also swelling and is running at about 1,600 cubic feet per second, Gamette said.

As a comparison, the new Third South river is running at about 45 cubic feet per second, which is a little more than 20,000 gallons per minute, he said.

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